

Diversity, Patriotism, Freedom of Expression, And The Star-Spangled Banner

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Teaching the core democratic values is an important part of the work of every teacher of social studies. Like most things in our representative democracy it is easier to agree with the ideals of those core values in the abstract than to actually put them into action. This lesson requires students to use what they know about the core democratic values, while testing the limits of their commitment to them. A variety of active engaged powerful social studies strategies have been used to create this lesson as an example of how powerful strategies can lead to reflective thinking --- a necessary skill of a responsible citizen.

The Flow of the Lesson

1. Read letters to the editor.
2. Listen to the Star Spangled Banner sung by the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.¹
3. Listen to Jimi Hendrix play the Star Spangled Banner.²
4. Read Biographical and background information on Fritchie and Hendrix.
5. Divide group in half, assign groups defense of one of the letters.
6. Each group should discuss how they would support their position. Each group should have a copy of the Core Democratic Values.
7. Each group member should make a badge that states the point of view of his or her group and put it on.
8. Each group should count off and each member of the group should put their number on their badge.
9. Each group should stand and find their discussion partner.
10. Discuss your position with the person assigned your number from the other group.
11. Write your true position on a 6 X 8 inch card, support your position with a Core Democratic Value, and write one more sentence that explains how your Core Democratic Value applies in this case.
12. Write your name on the reverse of the card.
13. When given the signal slide your card to your right.
14. Give a smile or frown to the card slid to you based on whether the Core Democratic Value stated on the card works and is explained.
15. Keep sliding and reviewing cards until the owner of the card receives his/her card back.

¹God Bless America, For the Benefit of The Twin Towers Fund, Sony Music Entertainment Inc., 2001 *The Star Spangled Banner*, The Mormon Tabernacle Choir

² Experience Hendrix, The Best of Jimi Hendrix, MCA Records, 1997 *The Star Spangled Banner* Jimi Hendrix.

Adding the Music

No one knows for sure who decided on the tune for “The Star-Spangled Banner.” It might have been Judge Nicholson. It might have been Francis Scott Key himself. The tune was that of a traditional English song called “To Anacreon in Heaven.” It was about drinking ale and being in love. It was a very old song that had been popular in America and England for a long time.

By the time it became “The Star-Spangled Banner,” the tune to “Anacreon in Heaven” had been used for at least eighty-five other American songs, including another one by Key. Nine years earlier, Francis Scott Key had written a poem called “When the Warrior Returns” and set it to the tune. One of the lines for that poem is “By the light of the star-spangled flag.” If that sounds familiar, it’s because Key used a line very much like it in his later poem: “O, say does that star-spangled banner yet wave....”³

³ Stephanie St. Pierre, *Our National Anthem*, The Millbrook Press, page 26, ISBN:1-878841-89-0

MANY WAYS TO SING ANTHEM

An Oct. 17 letter called for a campaign on how the National Anthem should be sung (“Sing anthem the right way”). But is there a single “Proper” way? The melody was originally a low and dirty drinking song where off-key crooning must have led to variation. Yet Francis Scott Key must have had some idea in mind when he matched his words to the tune like a fitted glove.

What was originally about cannonballs assailing a flagstaff at Fort McHenry has become so much more with each fallen soldier who died keeping the flag held high, to Barbara Fritchie’s defiant display to each step of the civil rights march to each step of a somber rescue worker. The aggregate connotations of what each phrase means—land of the free, home of the brave—are the stories of individual effort. With every effort and because of it, our flag still waves

There is no one way to sing the anthem, just as there is no one way to be an American. A certain individual’s rendition can capture our tears, our courage, our hope, even our defiance. It is a tribute that, from Sousa to Hendrix, our National Anthem can encompass what we are -- and why.

Michael Mawilai
Oak Park

ONE WAY TO SING IT RIGHT

I could not agree more with the letter expressing dismay at the current tendency of singers to rewrite the national anthem. I have actually left events when I have heard some of these nauseating variations.

Every sports team and anyone else who begins a program with a guest singer should furnish the performer with words and music and deny them the opportunity to appear if they cannot or will not sing the song we all know and love.

Sara Cummings
St. Clair

October 21, 2001 Detroit News

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Biographies

Jimi Hendrix

(James Marshall Hendrix), 1942-70,

African-American rock guitarist, b. Seattle, Wash. Hendrix, in his short musical career, was known for an innovative guitar style that involved the extensive but sensitively nuanced use of feedback, distortion, and other electronically manipulated sound effects. His recordings include the albums *Are You Experienced?* (1967), *Axis: Bold as Love* (1967), and *Electric Ladyland* (1968). He toured with his bands The Experience (1967-69) and Band of Gypsys (1969-70) and appeared at both the Monterey Pop Festival and Woodstock. He was well known for his version of the Star-Spangled Banner that closed the Woodstock festival in New York.

Frietschie or Fritchie, Barbara (b. Haver) 1766 -- 1862

Heroine; born in Lancaster, Pa. Her father was a hatter and she married John Casper Frietschie, a glovemaker, in 1806. According to legend, on September 6, 1862, at the age of 95, she boldly displayed the Union flag as Confederate soldiers passed by her home in Frederick, Maryland. In tribute to her bravery, she was not harmed. When an account of the incident reached John Greenleaf Whittier, he immortalized it in his poem: "Shoot, if you must, this old gray head / But spare your country's flag,' she said." A replica of her house was built in 1926.

BARBARA FRITCHIE

By: John Greenleaf Whittier

*"The Clustered Spires of Frederick stand Green-walled
by the hills of Maryland."*

Up from the meadows rich with corn,
Clear in the cool September morn,
The clustered spires of Frederick stand
Green-walled by the hills of Maryland,
Round about them orchards sweep,
Apple and peach-tree fruited deep,
Fair as a garden of the Lord
To the eyes of the famished rebel horde,
On that pleasant morn of the early Fall

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When Lee marched over the mountain-
wall,
Over the mountains winding down,
Horse and foot, into Frederick town.
Forty flags with their silver stars,
Forty flags with their crimson bars,
Flapped in the morning wind: the sun
Or noon looked down, and saw not one.
Up rose old Barbara Fritchie then,
Bowed with her fourscore years and ten,
Bravest of all in Frederick town,
She took up the flag the men hauled down;
In her attic-window the staff she set,
To show that one heart was loyal yet,
Up the street came the rebel tread,
Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.
Under his slouched hat left and right
He glanced, the old flag met his sight.
"Halt!"- the dust-brown ranks stood fast,
"Fire!"- out blazed the rifle-blast.

It shivered the window, pane and sash;
It rent the banner with seam and gash.
Quick as it fell, from the broken staff
Dame Barbara snatched the silken scarf;
She leaned far out on the window-sill,
And shook it forth with a royal will.
"Shoot if you must this old grey head,
But spare your country's flag," she said.
A shade of sadness, a blush of shame,
Over the face of the leader came;
The nobler nature within him stirred
To life at that woman's deed and word;
"Who touches a hair on yon gray head
Dies like a dog! March on!" he said.
All day long through Frederick street
Sounded the tread of marching feet;
All day long that free flag tost
Over the heads of the rebel host.
Ever its torn folds rose and fell
On the loyal winds that loved it well;
And through the hill gaps sunset light
Shown over it a warm good-night.
Barbara Fritchie's work is o'er.
And the Rebel rides on his raids no more.
Honor to her! and let a tear
Fall, for her sake, on Stonewall's bier.
Over Barbara Fritchie's grave
Flag of Freedom and Union, wave!
Peace and order and beauty draw
Round thy symbol of light and law;
And ever the stars above look down
On thy stars below in Frederick town!

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